

Teacher Satisfaction Among Itinerant Teachers of the
Deaf and Hard of Hearing

by

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A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Approved November 2016 by the
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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

December 2016

ABSTRACT

Teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing have served Arizona since 1912 when the Arizona School for the Deaf and Blind opened in Tucson, Arizona. Several decades later the Phoenix Day School for the Deaf was established in the Phoenix metropolitan area. To reach deaf and visually impaired students in the rural areas of Arizona, itinerant teachers travel from school to school, providing instruction and consultation with families and school personnel. The purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions and attitudes of itinerant teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing as to job satisfaction. Four research questions addressed the roles and responsibilities of itinerant teachers: extent of teacher participation in professional development activities; the opinions and attitudes of teachers toward their work; and additional comments and concerns. To answer these questions, 43 participants from five cooperatives established by the Arizona State School for the Deaf and Blind responded to a modified version of the 2007-2008 Schools and Staffing Survey regarding itinerant teacher job satisfaction. Two open-ended questions made this survey a mixed methods study of both quantitative and qualitative data. It was found itinerant teachers worked with students with a variety of hearing losses and educational needs; worked with regular classroom teachers and other school personnel; planned, assessed, and kept records; coordinated and conducted consultation and IEP meetings; worked with parents; provided technical support; traveled to different schools to work with students; provided accommodations and modifications; and provided direct instruction to DHH students. As to professional development, participants found language strategies and content of subjects taught to be useful and most attended. Ninety-one percent of the cooperative teachers seemed satisfied as a teacher. They felt support

from administration, were satisfied with how the cooperatives were managed, and agreed that they were recognized for their efforts. Some of the concerns from teachers were their salary, the paperwork involved with itinerant teaching, and the limited amount of resources available to them. Overall, the findings of this study provided a baseline of information that suggest more work needs to be done related to job satisfaction of itinerant teachers.

To Masani Pearl Sage and Nali Edith Wood Peshlakai.
I would not be the woman I am today without them.
Their teachings to my parents taught me the
importance of getting an education and
to believe in myself.

To my parents, Kenneth and Betty Peshlakai.
Their guidance, words of encouragement and
unwavering belief in me have built the
foundation on which I now stand.

To my brothers Jeffrey, Michael, Terry and Kenneth Jr.
They have been my teachers, protectors and
continued source of great support.

To my sister Andee and my nieces Teresa, Rebeka and Kansa.
Their love, enthusiasm, and reassurance were, and remains,
an indispensable part of this journey.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my committee members who were more than generous with their expertise and precious time. A special thanks to Dr. Dee Spencer, my dissertation chair, for her countless hours of reflecting, reading, encouraging, and, most of all, patience throughout this entire process. Thank you to Dr. Nicholas Appleton and Dr. Treva Gilmore for agreeing to serve on my committee.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the Arizona State School for the Deaf and Blind, especially the five regional cooperatives, for allowing me to conduct my research and providing any assistance requested. Special thanks go to Jane Krahe, my boss and mentor, who encouraged me throughout this process.

Finally, I would like to thank the regional cooperatives Deaf and Hard of Hearing itinerant teachers who assisted me with this project. Their willingness and time spent to complete the surveys and provide feedback were greatly appreciated.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Reaching and maintaining teacher job satisfaction is an issue facing schools across the country. Because there is a strong correlation between job satisfaction and retention of teachers, it would benefit school administrators to be aware of the factors that influence job satisfaction and adopt leadership practices that promote retention of teachers.

Purpose of the Study

Currently, there is a shortage of itinerant teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing (D/HH) in the field. The attrition of itinerant teachers can be the result of job dissatisfaction. The purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions and attitudes of itinerant teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing (D/HH) as to job satisfaction. It is imperative for school administrators to take note of job-related satisfaction and dissatisfaction in order to retain teachers.

Background

IDEA was originally enacted by Congress in 1975 to ensure that children with disabilities have the opportunity to receive a free appropriate public education, just like other children. The law has been revised many times over the years. The most recent amendment was passed by Congress in December 2004, with final regulations published in August 2006 (Part B for school-aged children) and in September 2011 (Part C, for babies and toddlers). So, in one sense, the law is very new, even as it has a long, detailed, and powerful history (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2016).

Special education teachers have been trained to work with students with a variety of disabilities. Teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing are specifically trained to work on academic, language, and communication development with students who have a variety of hearing losses. Teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing have served Arizona since 1912 when the Arizona School for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB) opened in Tucson, Arizona. Several decades later the Phoenix Day School for the Deaf was established in order for ASDB to provide services in the Phoenix metropolitan area. Beginning in the late 1980s, the regional cooperatives began servicing students who were deaf and hard of hearing in public school campuses in Arizona statewide. Currently there are four types of program options for students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing: (a) residential, (b) special day school for the deaf, (c) resource classroom, and (d) itinerant basis within regional cooperatives.

This study focused on five regional cooperatives of the Arizona State School for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB). ASDB was established in 1912 to educate children who are deaf, blind, deaf/blind and/or multiply disabled with severe sensory impairment (MDSSI). ASDB Tucson campus is a residential school for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing (D/HH), visually impaired (VI), and MDSSI students in preschool through 12th grade. In 1989, ASDB began an innovative program to set up three cooperatives within the state to provide both D/HH and visually impairment services in a mainstream setting. Today there are five cooperatives that provide services throughout the state: North Central Regional Cooperative (NCRC), Eastern Highlands Regional Cooperative (EHRC), Desert Valley Regional Cooperative (DVRC), Southwest Regional Cooperative (SWRC), and Southeast Regional Cooperative (SERC).

Since the establishment of the cooperatives 20 years ago, it became possible for itinerant teachers of the D/HH and VI to provide services for deaf, hard of hearing and visually impaired students in their home district. Itinerant teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing provide instruction, assess D/HH students' present levels of performance, write Individual Education Plans based on educational needs, check amplification and ensure that modification and accommodations are implemented in their students' classrooms.

Recruitment and attrition of itinerant DHH teachers has been a concern since the inception of the regional cooperatives. Recruiting teachers to live in rural areas taking on a job that includes isolation, travel, ongoing student caseload changes, and unpredictable work environments is difficult. Once a teacher is hired, cooperative administrators then have to focus on job satisfaction and reduction of teacher attrition in order to provide ongoing DHH services to students in Arizona public schools.

Job satisfaction is defined as "an affective response to one's job as a whole or to particular facets of it" (Cooley & Yavanoff, 1996, p. 337). Individuals who have a favorable attitude toward their job are more highly motivated to remain in that position. Few studies are available directly relating to job satisfaction for itinerant teachers, but there have been studies that have identified practices that support teachers in general.

Chapman and Lowther (1982) stated that there are four variables that influence job satisfaction amongst teachers: (a) teacher's personal characteristics; (b) teacher's skills and abilities; (c) the criteria a teacher uses to judge his or her professional success, and (d) professional accomplishments. These variables meaningfully relate to both

teachers' decisions to remain in teaching and teachers' level of job satisfaction. Attrition of teachers can occur when one or two of these variables are lacking or absent.

There is little research on the attrition of itinerant teachers. Most general education teachers have similar reasons as itinerant teachers to leave their position, such as low salaries, unfavorable working conditions, inadequate teacher preparation, or lack of administrative support (Hammond, 2003). However, there are some specific dissatisfiers for itinerant DHH teachers. A study done by Luckner and Hanks (2003) took a look at seven areas that indicated negative effects on job appreciation of itinerant DHH teachers: (a) paperwork, (b) state assessment tests, (c) family involvement, (d) time for nonteaching responsibilities and planning, (e) limited exposure to DHH adult role models, (f) availability of appropriate tests normed on DHH students, and (g) limited opportunities for professional development.

Based on these satisfiers and dissatisfiers and the high need for DHH itinerant teachers, it is imperative that administrators have a work environment that can influence job satisfaction. When an itinerant DHH leaves his or her position, the students are the ones to pay for they will not receive DHH services until that position is filled again. It would benefit regional cooperative administrators to monitor salaries, working conditions, travel, paperwork, assessments, teaching and nonteaching responsibilities, caseload, and continuing professional development in order for teachers to stay with the cooperatives.

Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

Question 1: What are the characteristics of itinerant teachers of D/HH students?

Question 2: What is the extent of teacher participation in professional development activities?

Question 3: What are the opinions and attitudes of D/HH itinerant teachers toward their work?

Question 4: What are the additional comments and concerns from D/HH itinerant teachers regarding their job?

Significance of the Study

Currently, there is a shortage of itinerant teachers of the D/HH in the field. The attrition of itinerant teachers can be the result of job dissatisfaction. It is imperative for school administrators to take note of job-related satisfactions and dissatisfactions in order to retain teachers. “Those who report higher levels of job satisfaction are more likely to plan on remaining in the field” (Stempien & Loeb, 2002). An emerging body of research shows that teacher retention directly correlates with teacher job satisfaction.

Limitations of Study

School demographics. ASDB is comprised of two main campuses and five cooperatives ranging from early childhood education through high school. The five cooperatives provide itinerant services for both deaf/hard of hearing and visually impaired students in the state of Arizona only. The itinerant teachers working in the cooperatives represent itinerant services provided to students statewide.

Teacher demographics. This study was limited to ASDB cooperative itinerant teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing. Every teacher in both rural and urban areas was given the opportunity to participate in this study through an online survey with the option

to answer additional interview questions. Teachers across the state may differ in their demographic profile in regards to items such as age, ethnicity, and gender.

Data collection. Data were collected through an online survey. It was distributed to all ASDB cooperative itinerant teachers of the deaf/hard of hearing in both rural and urban areas during the 2011-2012 academic school year. There were no follow-up interviews.

Response rate and response time of teachers. Forty-three of the 59 teachers completed the online survey for a 73% response rate. Moreover, the teachers answered the survey within two months.

Assumption. During the distribution of the survey there was an assumption of honesty. Participants were promised anonymity when taking the survey.

Definition of Terms

Itinerant teacher: A teacher who travels from school to school, providing instruction as well as consulting with families and school personnel (Luckner & Miller, 1994).

Deaf: Any student who has a hearing loss of 56dB or greater (Shirmer, 2001). Legislative definition for the state of Arizona calls these students “hearing impaired.”

Hard of hearing: The term *hard of hearing* applies to any individual whose hearing loss is less than 55dB.

Abbreviations

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, recently amended in 2004

IEP: Individualized Education Plan

D/HH: Deaf/Hard of Hearing

ASDB: Arizona State School for the Deaf and Blind

NCR: North Central Regional Cooperative

EHR: Eastern Highlands Regional Cooperative

DVR: Desert Valley Regional Cooperative

SER: Southeast Regional Cooperative

SWR: Southwest Regional Cooperative

Summary

Chapter 1 of this study has examined the perceptions and attitudes of itinerant teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing (D/HH) and their effects on job satisfaction. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on research studies contributing to the body of knowledge of job satisfaction among itinerant teachers of the D/HH. Chapter 3 describes the research methods used to gain data on job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. Chapter 4 presents the data and results of this study. Chapter 5 presents a summary and conclusions of the research and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

A review of selected material for Chapter 2 pertains to job satisfaction and its relationship to itinerant teaching for the deaf and hard of hearing. There are eight areas discussed in this chapter: history of job satisfaction, theories of job satisfaction, teacher attrition, teacher retention, history of education of the DHH, education of DHH in Arizona, itinerant teacher roles and responsibilities, and job satisfaction with itinerant DHH teachers.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction has been defined as “an affective response to one’s job as a whole or to particular facets of it” (Cooley & Yovanoff, 1996, p. 341). Individuals who have a favorable attitude toward their job are more highly motivated to remain in and perform their job (Katzell & Thompson, 1990). Because there is a strong correlation between job satisfaction and retention of teachers, it would benefit school administrators to be aware of the factors that influence job satisfaction and adopt leadership practices that promote retention of teachers.

Theories of Job Satisfaction

The Maslow’s needs hierarchy theory (1970) has suggested that human needs form a five-level hierarchy consisting of physiological needs, safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. The premise of Maslow’s hierarchy is that there are essential needs that need to be met first before more complex needs can be met. This hierarchy

was developed to explain human motivation in general. This theory's main tenets can be applied for the work setting and have been used to explain job satisfaction.

The needs that need to be met first are *physiological needs*, which are needs that sustain the body (i.e., food, water). Next are *safety needs* that represent both physical and psychological needs. *Belonging* is the need for affection and attention. Then there are *esteem needs*, which is the need for achievement, independence, and self-respect. Lastly, there is *self-actualization*, which is the desire to be self-fulfilled. Each person starts at birth at the bottom of the hierarchy. When one need is met, its importance is reduced and the person begins to concentrate on the next higher level. It would benefit organizations to meet the basic needs of their employees before addressing higher order needs to improve employee job satisfaction.

Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory was based on Frederic Herzberg's concern of the discrepancy of Maslow's needs hierarchy. Herzberg (1976) believed that sequential satisfaction does not work. Herzberg's theory emphasizes that there are separate and distinct factors accounting for job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Employees' needs are in terms of satisfying experiences called motivators and dissatisfying experiences called hygiene factors (Herzberg, 1976). Job satisfaction is then related to tasks, whereas dissatisfaction is related to the work situation.

The Job Characteristics Model by Hackman and Oldham (Fried & Ferris, 1987) states that when the work environment encourages intrinsically motivating characteristics, job satisfaction occurs. There are five core job dimensions: skill variety, task identify, task significance, autonomy, and feedback that can influence three psychological states: meaningfulness of work, responsibility and knowledge of results.

Therefore, the Job Characteristics Model suggests that in order to better the work environment and increase job satisfaction, organizations need to improve upon the five core job dimensions.

Research indicated (Whingham, 1991) that “the Dispositional Approach,” according to Staw and Ross (1985), involves measuring personal characteristics which can help to explain individual attitudes and behavior” (p. 2). This approach hypothesizes that job satisfaction is closely related to personal characteristics. Staw and Ross (1985) suggested “that dispositions include both stable individual characteristics (predispositions) as well as temporary moods (affective states)” (p. 2). As a result, according to Staw, Bell and Clausen (1986), these dispositions, can cause employees to “process information about the job in a way that is consistent with that disposition, and then experience job satisfaction or dissatisfaction as a result” (p. 61).

Teacher Attrition

Billingsley (2004) did an analysis of literature focusing on attrition. The author described attrition as teachers who left teaching altogether due to retirement, furthering their education, staying home to take care of their children, or taking a nonteaching position. In the author’s analysis he found that there were four factors that can influence a teacher to leave: teacher characteristics and personal factors; teacher qualifications; work environment; and affective responses to work. Teacher characteristics and personal factors include age, gender, race, finances, and other personal reasons, all of which greatly influence a teacher’s decision to leave. Teacher qualifications such as certifications, academic ability, degrees earned, and teacher preparation can also influence teachers to stay in their profession. Darling-Hammond (1999) stated that if

teachers are well prepared in both content and pedagogy they will be more effective in the classroom as well as have more longevity. Work environment variables such as salary, school climate, administrative support, colleague support, support through induction and mentoring, professional development, teacher roles, paperwork, and caseload issues can influence both satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Excessive and prolonged work problems lead to negative affective reactions such as an increase of stress, decrease of job satisfaction and reduction of commitment. The author stresses that policymakers and administrators need to take interest in all the factors that influence attrition. (p. 54)

Borman and Dowling (2008) completed “a comprehensive meta-analysis of 32 quantitative studies related to teachers’ career trajectories and attrition from or retention in the field.” The researchers wanted to know “why attrition occurs and what factors moderate attrition outcomes” (p. 367). The researchers found that there were five moderators of attrition: teacher demographics, teacher qualifications, school organization, school resources, and student body characteristics. All of these have a direct impact on teacher attrition. The researchers concluded that administrators need to be aware of these moderators in order to reduce attrition. They also found four themes occurring when analyzing all 32 studies: unhealthy attrition, attrition influenced by a number of personal and professional factors that change over time in one’s career path, unfavorable work conditions that predict attrition, and various other conditions (e.g., salary, administrative support, and teacher collaboration) that can be changed.

In 2008, the Alliance for Excellent Education, a Washington, DC–based national policy and advocacy organization, took a look at the ramifications of teacher turnover and the need to reduce attrition in schools. In the report, the authors discussed the issues of cost, reasons teacher leave, and which teachers leave. It was noted that the National

Commission on Teaching and America's Future placed the cumulative costs for all schools and districts across the country, to hire, recruit and train teachers at \$7.34 billion. They stressed that this cost does not include the price the students pay when highly qualified teachers leave, such as students' academic success and test achievement. The authors looked into reasons why teachers leave. They noted that working conditions, lack of support from administration, and dissatisfaction with teacher relationships with parents, principal and students. The teachers who generally leave are ones who have high academic credentials (i.e., GPA.) and strong education credentials (i.e., level of degree). They noted that teachers who are invested in their career as educators tend to stay in the field longer. They emphasized that the key to retaining teachers' lies "in the level of success teachers encounter raising their students' academic performances" (p. 24). Based on this reason, teachers need as much support from administration as possible in terms of training, mentoring, professional development, common planning time, and networking with other educators.

Teacher Retention

Kersaint, Lewis, Potter, and Meisels (2006) conducted a study that used Ajzean's Theory of Planned Behavior to examine a teacher's plan to stay or leave the current teaching position. They looked at factors that "encourage or hinder resigned teachers to return to teaching, the importance of those factors and the importance of those factors for teachers who remained in teaching" (p.775). Their study revealed six factors that influence teacher retention: time with family, family responsibility, administrative support, financial benefits, paperwork/assessment, and the joy of teaching. Time spent with family and being able to carry out family responsibilities were found to be of the

greatest importance. Administrative support included discipline, school governance, and professional support. Moreover, administration providing professional development opportunities, mentoring, and improving school facilities. The authors found that teachers who leave put more importance on financial responsibilities than the teachers who remain. They found that teachers are “less likely to resign because of salary when other working conditions are satisfactory” (Kersaint et al., 2006, p. 790). Paperwork and assessment increased personal stress for all the teachers who participated in this study. The teachers who tended to stay in this profession were often found to enjoy teaching. They found that enhancing teacher retention requires effective intervention strategies focusing on the six factors that they found to influence teacher retention.

History of Deaf Education

In 1817 a man by the name of Laurent Clerc visited a School for the Deaf in Paris. It was there that he learned a method for sign language and instructing students who were deaf. Laurent Clerc then came back to America and co-founded the American Asylum for the Deaf-Mutes with Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet in Hartford, Connecticut. It was later renamed the American School for the Deaf. As years passed, more schools for the deaf were established across the United States.

In 1965 the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was created to “emphasize equal access and establishing high standards and accountability” in schools. This legislation paved the way for more legislation to be created in order for students with disabilities to become educated in general education schools. In 1975 the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) stated that all public schools that accepted federal funding needed to provide equal access to education and a free meal a day for children

with physical and mental disabilities. Public schools were also required to evaluate and create lessons plans for all children with disabilities so as to create an individualized educational plan with parent input that would closely resemble the educational experience of non-disabled students (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). In 1990, the EHA was later revised and renamed as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act which called for improvement of special education services.

In the 1970s students who were deaf and hard of hearing were educated at residential schools for the deaf (Foster & Cue, 2009). Due to federal legislation, such as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the IDEA of 1975, DHH students were able to attend mainstream schools. Initially, DHH students were placed in separate classrooms in the mainstream school. As federal legislation changed to provide more accommodations and modifications for students with special needs, more and more DHH students were able to be educated in regular classes in the mainstream school setting with DHH educational support. “In the 1990-1991 school year approximately 79% of deaf and hard of hearing students received their education in mainstream schools; by 1999-2000 this had increased to 84%” (Foster & Cue, 2009, p. 435). The 26th Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals Act (US Department of Education, 2004) “showed continuation of this trend through 2002, with the increases to 86% in mainstream schools and 50% in regular classes” (Foster & Cue, 2009, p. 435). This increase in DHH students enrolled in mainstreamed schools resulted in the need for itinerant teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing. DHH itinerant teachers provided direct instruction, consultation and collaboration with general education teachers in different schools that DHH students were enrolled.

Education of the DHH in Arizona

In October 1912, ASDB was established in Tucson, AZ. When the school first started there were only 19 students who were deaf or hard of hearing who attended. Classes were first held at the University of Arizona and then eventually to the campus ASDB resides on today. The school has been running for over 100 years and now educates over 2,000 students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind from birth to 12th grade. ASDB-Tucson campus has two schools, the school for the blind and the school for the deaf that provide both academic and recreational programs for students. ASDB Tucson campus is both a day program as well as a residential program (Arizona Schools for the Deaf and Blind, n.d.).

The need for a school closer to home led to the establishment of the Phoenix Day School for the Deaf in 1967. Families in the Phoenix Metropolitan area wanted a school that could provide instruction in the Phoenix area rather than sending their child to Tucson. Currently, over 350 students attend PDS from preschool to 12th grade. They provide specialized instruction based on the students' educational needs in both American Sign Language and English (Arizona's Schools for the Deaf and Blind, n.d.).

In 1987, the first of five regional cooperatives was established to provide instruction to deaf, hard of hearing, blind, and visually impaired students statewide. Instead of sending their children to Tucson Campus or moving to Phoenix, parents now have the option of keeping their child in local school districts to get DHH services. The five regional cooperatives are based in Flagstaff, Holbrook, Phoenix, Tucson, and Yuma. They provide itinerant services that include identification of student needs, evaluations/assessments of student progress, provision of equipment and materials, and

implementation of accommodations and modifications in the general education setting. Currently, the five regional cooperatives serve over 1,100 students statewide (Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind, n.d.).

Itinerant Teachers' Roles and Responsibilities

Foster and Cue (2009) collected data through surveys, interviews and observations of itinerant teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing to examine their roles and responsibilities. Survey results from 270 respondents showed itinerant teachers ranking the most important tasks and how they acquired the knowledge and skill of such tasks. The tasks listed were (a) working with students; (b) working with regular class teachers and other school personnel; (c) planning, assessing, and record keeping; (d) being a liaison and coordinating meetings and scheduling tasks; (e) working with parents; (f) providing technical support, and (g) listing skills and qualities needed in itinerants. Itinerant teachers surveyed noted that some tasks were hard to rank by importance because some of the tasks were equally important. However, the authors examined that the task more often mentioned first was "working with regular class teachers and other school personnel" (p. 441). The second most mentioned task was working with students. In order the next tasks were providing technical support, planning, coordinating, working with parents, and listing skills.

Luckner and Miller (2012) conducted a survey that examined the responsibilities, perceptions, and preparations of DHH itinerant teachers. Surveys completed by itinerant teachers in hearing impaired programs were from across the nation. The data obtained showed a significant difference of the roles and responsibilities of itinerant teachers of DHH than teachers in self-contained or resource classrooms. One of the differences they

found is that the hours spent driving between schools, getting the work place organized, and then finding the student almost equaled to that of a full day of work per week.

Itinerant teachers also spend a significant amount of time being a resource to school staff in regards to consultation, conducting in-services, and providing instructional accommodations and modifications. The data showed that itinerant teachers spent less than half of their work week instructing students. The data also showed that itinerant teachers work with a wide variety of students ranging in age, school setting, level of functioning, hearing loss, speech proficiency, and other disabilities.

Yarger and Luckner (1999) used qualitative methods to investigate itinerant teachers' perceptions of their responsibilities, job satisfaction, and their effectiveness. The authors interviewed 10 itinerant teachers asking them 10 questions pertaining to years of experience, percentage of time teaching students, enjoyable aspects of itinerant teaching, any barriers, collaboration, and the most important aspect of being an itinerant teacher. Years of experience teaching deaf and hard of hearing students ranged from 3 to 25 years. Teachers stated that they spent an "average of 60% of their job providing direct services to students. They also viewed direct service as the most important aspect of their job" (p. 310). Seventy percent of teachers stated that they spent on average two hours each day collaborating with parents and general education staff. The other 30% stated they found it difficult to find the time to meet with parents and professionals. Teachers stated that the positive aspects of their job were "the variety and autonomy itinerancy offered. They especially enjoyed the broad spectrum of schools, the diverse group of students, the changes in their daily schedules, and the wide range of students" (p. 311). The barriers the teachers stated were "isolation, time and budget constraints, and political

maneuvering. Some felt disconnected from a school or faculty because of the many schools visited, coupled with a lack of support and collegiality” (Yarger & Luckner, 1999, p. 15).

Job Satisfaction and Itinerant DHH Teachers

In 2003, Luckner and Hanks (2003) researched itinerant teachers nationwide to assess their job satisfaction. Six hundred and ten viable surveys were analyzed. After analyzing the data, the authors noticed two themes emerged relating to the gratification that comes from working with students and working with other teachers. There were several factors that respondents indicated a positive affect as to their job appreciation: relationships with colleagues, opportunities to use past training and education, structuring lessons that promote learning, security and permanence, pride and respect felt from being in this profession, and working with a wide range of students. There were seven factors that respondents indicated that had a negative effect on their appreciation of their job: paperwork, state assessment tests, lack of family involvement, lack of time for nonteaching responsibilities and planning, lack of adult role models who are deaf or hard of hearing, availability of appropriate tests, and limited number of opportunities for professional development. The authors stated to reduce attrition attention needs to be paid to teacher preparation programs that prepare and inform future itinerant teachers the roles, responsibilities, and factors that affect both satisfaction and dissatisfaction in itinerant teachers. Moreover,

school administration needs to do everything in their power to assist professionals in the field of deaf education to find ways of maximizing their achievements, to feel pride in past successes, and to know that other colleagues share their feelings of frustration and discouragement. In addition, deaf education professionals need to find positive ways of dealing effectively with the changing demands of the job,

as well as to identify ways to protect and take of themselves so that they can meet future challenges effectively and productively. (Luckner & Hanks, 1994, p. 15)

Summary

This chapter reviews the literature and research relative to the following topics: history of job satisfaction, theories of job satisfaction, teacher attrition, teacher retention, history of education of the DHH, education of DHH in Arizona, itinerant teacher roles and responsibilities, and job satisfaction with itinerant DHH teachers. It was found that little research has been done specifically focusing on job satisfaction of itinerant teachers of the deaf.

Upon review of the studies, the roles and responsibilities of DHH itinerant teachers are numerous and multi-faceted compared to classroom teachers. Itinerant teachers (a) work with students with a variety of hearing losses and educational needs; (b) work with regular classroom teachers and other school personnel; (c) plan, assess, and keep records; (d) coordinate and conduct consultation and IEP meetings; (e) work with parents; (f) provide technical support in regards to hearing assistive technology; (g) travel to different school to work with students; (h) provide accommodations and modifications to general education curriculum; (i) participate in professional development activities when offered, and (j) provide direct instruction to DHH students (Foster & Cue, 2009). Due to the amount of responsibilities and logistics, some DHH teachers feel dissatisfied because of the amount of paperwork, state assessment tests, lack of family involvement; lack of time for nonteaching responsibilities and planning; lack of adult role models who are deaf or hard of hearing; availability of appropriate tests; and a limited number of opportunities for professional development (Luckner & Hanks, 2003).

Studies indicated that teachers are experiencing stress and burnout along with the lack of work satisfaction in their job, which then results in teacher attrition. Because of dissatisfaction, teachers are deciding to leave the profession while older teachers take early retirement. It is important that administrators adopt practices that will promote job satisfaction.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions and attitudes of itinerant teachers of the deaf/hard of hearing (D/HH) and their effects on job satisfaction. In this chapter there is a description of the research design and procedures of this study. This chapter also includes research questions, research methods, population and sample, data collection and procedures, instrument used, and data analysis procedures.

Research Questions

The purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions and attitudes of itinerant teachers of the deaf/hard of hearing (D/HH) and their effects on job satisfaction.

The following research questions guided this study:

Question 1: What are the characteristics of itinerant teachers of D/HH students?

Question 2: What is the extent of teacher participation in professional development activities?

Question 3: What are the opinions and attitudes of D/HH itinerant teachers toward their work?

Question 4: What are the additional comments and concerns from D/HH itinerant teachers regarding their job?

Research Design and Procedures

Research Methods

Quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to gain data to answer the research questions through the administration of an online survey emailed to teachers

in Arizona who were itinerant teachers of the D/HH. In addition to close-ended question, an open-ended question was added to provide qualitative data based on the opinions of the respondents. Identification of satisfiers and dissatisfiers may provide the ASDB regional cooperatives tools for improving DHH itinerant teacher job satisfaction and reduce attrition.

Population and Sample

The population drew from the five cooperatives established by the Arizona State School for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB) in the state of Arizona. As a member of one of the regional cooperatives, I was a supervising teacher for the itinerant D/HH program. This allowed me to gain access and approval for surveying all teachers. Of the 59 surveys sent out, there were 43 responses, a 73% response rate.

Data Collection Procedures

The procedures used for this study began by meeting with the NCRC Director to discuss conducting a statewide study of itinerant DHH teachers employed with ASDB. After the initial approval of the NCRC Director, a proposal was sent to the superintendent of ASDB to get his approval. Once the study was approved by the superintendent, a letter was send to the principle investigator stating approval. A second meeting then took place to present this study to all five regional cooperative directors to request approval to send out an online survey to all DHH itinerant teachers statewide. After getting approval from all five regional directors, the survey link was sent to regional cooperative secretaries to send out to each itinerant DHH teacher in their cooperative. After two weeks, a reminder email was sent to cooperative secretaries and then to DHH teachers.

In the email sent to the DHH teachers was a description and purpose of this study. They were asked to take the survey online through Survey Monkey. They were told their answers would be anonymous.

Instrument

Data compiled came from online surveys given to 59 cooperative itinerant teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing. Using a modified version of the 2007-2008 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), teachers responded to questions regarding job satisfaction. The survey administered was through an online program, Survey Monkey, and answers were anonymous.

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative and qualitative data analysis procedures were used for this study. By calculating percentages of responses for number of students, miles traveled, number of sites visited, years of experience, and professional development opportunities, one could determine factors influencing job satisfaction. The researcher calculated the responses for each item and reported them by numbers and the percentage of teachers who responded for each of the response choices. The data were then disaggregated by the research questions and sub-questions to be able to compare the responses by the different variables.

The qualitative data were obtained from their responses to two open-ended questions at the end of the survey. The data were coded by determining predominant themes occurring in the responses and examples were provided that best illustrated these themes.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions and attitudes of itinerant teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing (D/HH) and their effects on job satisfaction. The purpose was accomplished by surveying itinerant teachers of the D/HH throughout the state of Arizona. The following research questions guided this study:

Question 1: What are the characteristics of itinerant teachers of D/HH students?

Question 2: What is the extent of teacher participation in professional development activities?

Question 3: What are the opinions and attitudes of D/HH itinerant teachers toward their work?

Question 4: What are the additional comments and concerns from D/HH itinerant teachers regarding their job?

Results of the Survey

Of the 59 surveys sent out, there were 43 responses, 73% response rate. The following tables show the responses to each of the survey questions. In the first section, the characteristics of the respondents are presented as follows: their years of teaching experience, the classification of their position, the subjects taught, the level of deaf education received, number of years taught in a residential school, whether a highly qualified teacher, number of students in their caseload, and the number of hours worked per week.

In the next section, responses to teachers' participation in professional development activities and their opinions of their usefulness are presented. In the third section, the opinions and attitudes of the respondents toward their work are presented, and in the final section, responses to the open-ended questions are presented and illustrated with quotations from the respondents.

Characteristics of the Respondents

Survey Question 1. Survey Question 1 asked, “How many years have you taught as an itinerant teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing?” About one-third (35%) of respondents had one to five years of experience, while nearly one-third (30%) had 11 to 13 years of experience (see Table 1). Twenty-one percent were well experienced with 16 to over 25 years of experience.

Table 1

Teachers' Years of Experience

Number of years	<i>N</i>	%
1- 5	15	34.88
6-10	6	13.95
11-15	13	30.23
16-20	2	4.65
21-25	7	16.28

Survey Question 2. Survey Question 2 asked, “How would you classify your teaching position?” Most respondents (90.7%) classified themselves as a full-time itinerant teacher in the regional cooperatives (see Table 2).

Table 2

Respondents' Classification of Their Position

Clarification	<i>N</i>	%
Full-time	39	90.70
Part-time	4	9.30
Substitute	0	0.0

Survey Question 3. Survey Question 3: asked, “What subject(s) do you teach?”

When asked what subject(s) they taught, all of the respondents (100%) stated they taught Language Arts (100%), over half (57%) taught math, and nearly half taught science (47.5%), and social studies (42.5%; see Table 3).

Table 3

Subjects Taught

Subject	<i>N</i>	%
Language Arts	40	100
Math	23	57.50
Science	19	47.50
Social studies	17	42.50

Note. All teachers did not answer some of the questions ($n = 40$)

Survey Question 4. Survey Question 4 asked, “What level of education did you receive in the area of deaf education?” Most respondents (70%) had a master’s degree in the area of deaf education (see Table 4). Only 4 (9.4%) had only taken classes in deaf education and one held a doctorate degree.

Table 4

Education in Deaf Education

Level of education	<i>N</i>	%
Took classes	4	9.30
Bachelors	8	18.60
Master's	30	69.77
Ed.D/Ph.D	1	2.33

Survey Question 5. Survey Question 5 asked, “Have you ever worked as an elementary or secondary teacher at a residential school for the deaf? Most respondents (67.44%) had not worked at a residential school for the deaf at either the elementary or secondary level (see Table 5).

Table 5

Teaching at a Residential School for the Deaf

Response	<i>N</i>	%
Yes	14	32.56
No	29	67.44

Survey Question 6. Survey Question 6 asked, “This school year, are you a highly qualified teacher (HQT) according to your state’s requirements?” Nearly all the respondents (90%) were highly qualified teachers according to the state’s requirements (see Table 6).

Table 6

Highly Qualified Teacher Status

Response	<i>N</i>	%
Yes	38	90.48
No	4	9.52

Note. (*n* = 42)

Survey Question 7. Survey Question 7 asked, “During your most recent FULL week of teaching, what is the total number of students on your caseload?” Nearly a quarter of the respondents (32%) stated they had 6 to 10 students. Some respondents (30%) stated they had 11 to 15 students (see Table 7). Typically, the more a student has higher educational needs, the less the itinerant teacher has on his or her caseload.

Table 7

Students on Caseload

Number of students	<i>N</i>	%
0-5	6	13.95
6-10	14	32.56
11-15	13	30.23
16-20	7	16.28
21-25+	3	6.98

Survey Question 8. Survey Question 8 asked, “Including hours spent during the day, before and after school, and on the weekends, how many hours did you spend on all teaching and other school-related activities during a typical full week at your school, not

including instructional time.” A quarter of respondents (25.7%) said they spent 25 to 29 hours on teaching and school-related activities. Another quarter of respondents (25%) spent up to 10 to 14 hours on teaching and school-related activities (see Table 8).

Table 8

Number of Hours Spent on Teaching and Other School-related Activities

Number of hours	<i>N</i>	%
0-4	3	7.50
5-9	8	20.00
10-14	10	25.00
15-19	5	12.50
20-24	3	7.50
25-29	11	27.50

Note. (*n* = 40)

Participation in Professional Development Activities

Survey Question 9. Survey Question 9 asked, “In the past 12 months, have you participated in any professional development activities specific to and concentrating on the content of the subject(s) you teach?” Most respondents (95.3%) said they have participated in professional development specific to the content they were teaching. Only 2 (4.65%) did not participate in any professional development activities (see Table 9).

Table 9

Participation in Professional Development Activities Focusing on the Subject(s) Taught

Response	<i>N</i>	%
Yes	41	95.35
No	2	4.65

Survey Question 10. Survey Question 10 asked, “Overall, how useful were these activities to you?” Most respondents (63.41%) said the professional development activities focusing on the content they were teaching were useful (see Table 10).

Table 10

Usefulness of Professional Development Activities of Subject(s) Taught

Response	<i>N</i>	%
Not useful	1	2.44
Somewhat useful	6	14.63
Useful	26	63.41
Very useful	8	19.51

Note. (*n* = 41)

Survey Question 11. Survey Question 11 asked, “In the past 12 months, have you participated in any professional development activities that focused on language strategies?” The majority of respondents (81%) have participated in professional development activities that focused on language strategies (see Table 11).

Table 11

Participation in Professional Development Focusing on Language Strategies

Response	<i>N</i>	%
Yes	35	81.40
No	8	18.60

Survey Question 12. Survey Question 12 asked, “Overall, how useful were these activities to you?” Most respondents (39%) said the professional development activities focusing on language strategies were useful. Almost a third of respondents (34.21%) said the professional development activities were very useful (see Table 12).

Table 12

Usefulness of Language Professional Development Activities

Response	<i>N</i>	%
Not useful	2	5.26
Somewhat useful	8	21.05
Useful	15	39.47
Very useful	13	34.21

Note. (*n* = 38)

Survey Question 13. Survey Question 13 asked, “In the past 12 months have you participated in any professional development activities that focused on developing communication skills?” A little more than half the respondents (56%) said they participated in professional development activities that focused on developing communication skills (see Table 13).

Table 13

Participation of Professional Development Activities Focusing on Communication Skills

Response	<i>N</i>	%
Yes	24	55.81
No	19	44.19

Survey Question 14. Question 14 asked, “Overall, how useful were these activities to you?” A third of the respondents (32%) said the professional development activities focusing on developing communication skills were useful. Nearly a third of respondents (29%) said the professional development activities were very useful (see Table 14).

Table 14

Usefulness of Communication Professional Development Activities

Response	<i>N</i>	%
Not useful	7	22.58
Somewhat useful	5	16.13
Useful	10	32.26
Very useful	9	29.03

Note. (*n* = 31)

Survey Question 15. Survey Question 15 asked, “In the past 12 months have you participated in any professional development activities that focused on students with multiple disabilities?” More than half the respondents (63%) said they had not

participated in any professional development activities that focused on students with multiple disabilities (see Table 15).

Table 15

Participation in Professional Development Focusing on Multiple Disabilities

Response	<i>N</i>	%
Yes	16	37.21
No	27	62.79

Survey Question 16. Survey Question 16 asked, “Overall, how useful were these activities to you?” There was an equal distribution of responses on this question.

Respondents stated the professional development they received focusing on students with disabilities ranged from not useful to very useful (see Table 16).

Table 16

Usefulness of Professional Development Focusing on Multiple Disabilities

Response	<i>N</i>	%
Not useful	5	22.73
Somewhat useful	6	27.27
Useful	5	22.73
Very useful	6	27.27

Note. (*n* = 22)

Survey Question 17. Survey Question 17 asked, “Have you participated in a mentor program within ASDB?” More than half the respondents (67%) stated they had not participated in a mentor program provided by ASDB (see Table 17).

Table 17

Participation in a Mentor Program

Response	<i>N</i>	%
Yes	29	67.44
No	14	32.56

Survey Question 18. Question 18 asked, “Overall, how useful were these activities to you?” Half the respondents (50%) said the mentor program offered within ASDB were useful to very useful (see Table 18).

Table 18

Usefulness of Mentor Program

Response	<i>N</i>	%
Not useful	12	38.71
Somewhat useful	3	9.68
Useful	8	25.81
Very useful	8	25.81

Note. (*n* = 31)

Opinions and Attitudes Toward Work

Survey Question 19. Survey Question 19 asked, “How much actual control do you have in your school sites over the following areas of your planning and teaching?” Most respondents stated they have the most control over selecting teaching techniques (71%), evaluation tools (55%), and determining mode of language during instruction (64%; see Table 19).

Table 19

Control of Planning and Teaching

–	No control	Minor control	Moderate control	A great deal of control	Total	Weighted average
Selecting textbooks and other instructional materials	40.48% 17	9.52% 4	19.05% 8	30.95% 13	42	2.40
Selecting content, topics, and skills to be taught	19.05% 8	16.67% 7	35.71% 15	28.57% 12	42	2.74
Selecting teaching techniques	4.76% 2	7.14% 3	16.67% 7	71.43% 30	42	3.55
Selecting evaluation tools	7.14% 3	11.90% 5	26.19% 11	54.76% 23	42	3.29
Determining mode of language during instruction	11.90% 5	2.38% 1	21.43% 9	64.29% 27	42	3.38
Grading students	28.57% 12	30.95% 13	19.05% 8	21.43% 9	42	2.33
Disciplining students	9.52% 4	33.33% 14	40.48% 17	16.67% 7	42	2.64
Determining the amount of homework assigned	26.19% 11	38.10% 16	16.67% 7	19.05% 8	42	2.29

Survey Question 20. Survey Question 20 asked, “To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?” Most respondents (40%) stated they were satisfied with their teaching salary but at the same time respondents (46%) worried about the security of their job (see Table 20).

Table 20

Reponses to Statements About Their Job

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Weighted average
The school administration's behavior toward the staff is supportive and encouraging	46.34% 19	39.02% 16	7.32% 3	7.32% 3	41	1.76
I am satisfied with my teaching salary	4.76% 2	28.57% 12	26.19% 11	40.48% 17	42	3.02
I receive a great deal of support from parents for the work I do	16.28% 7	48.84% 21	23.26% 10	11.63% 5	43	2.30
Necessary materials such as textbooks, supplies, and copy machines are available as needed by the staff	26.19% 11	52.38% 22	14.29% 6	7.14% 3	42	2.02
Routine duties and paperwork interfere with my job of teaching	9.52% 4	42.86% 18	33.33% 14	14.29% 6	42	2.52
Most of my colleagues share my beliefs and values about what the central mission of ASDB should be	26.19% 11	57.14% 24	11.90% 5	4.76% 2	42	1.95
There is a great deal of cooperative effort among the staff members	44.19% 19	39.53% 17	11.63% 5	4.65% 2	43	1.77
In this cooperative, staff members are recognized for a job well done	39.53% 17	41.86% 18	9.30% 4	9.30% 4	43	1.88
I worry about the security of my job	4.88% 2	12.20% 5	46.34% 19	36.59% 15	41	3.15
State or district content standards have had a positive influence on my satisfaction with teaching	7.14% 3	47.62% 20	33.33% 14	11.90% 5	42	2.50

Table 20 continued on next page

Table 20 (continued)

Reponses to Statements About Their Job

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Weighted average
I am given the support I need to teach students with multiple disabilities	16.28% 7	37.21% 16	34.88% 15	11.63% 5	43	2.42
I am generally satisfied with being a teacher at this cooperative	65.12% 28	23.26% 10	4.65% 2	6.98% 3	43	1.53

Survey Question 21. Survey Question 21 asked, “To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?” More than half the respondents (55.8%) strongly disagreed with the statement that stress and disappointments involved in itinerant teaching were not worth it. Remarkably, respondents (81%) strongly disagreed with transferring to another cooperative. Moreover, respondents (42%) strongly agreed with the statement of liking the way things were run in their cooperative (see Table 21).

Table 21

Response to Statements about Working at a Cooperative

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Weighted average
The stress and disappointments involved in itinerant teaching in this cooperative aren't really worth it	6.98% 3	9.30% 4	27.91% 12	55.81% 24	43	3.33
I like the way things are run at the school for the deaf	5.71% 2	48.57% 17	28.57% 10	17.14% 6	35	2.57
I like the way things are run in this cooperative	41.86% 18	46.51% 20	9.30% 4	2.33% 1	43	1.72
I think about transferring to another school	4.88% 2	21.95% 9	9.76% 4	63.41% 26	41	3.32
I think about transferring to another cooperative	0.00% 0	11.90% 5	7.14% 3	80.95% 34	42	3.69

Survey Question 22. Survey Question 22 asked, “Which factor is a major obstacle to your work?” Almost half the respondents (49%) stated that pay was the major obstacle in their work (see Table 22).

Table 22

Obstacles at Work

Response	<i>N</i>	%
Pay	18	48.65
Travel	6	16.22
Lack of resources	6	16.22
Lack of support of administration	0	0
Uncooperative parents	6	16.22
Uncooperative students	1	2.70

Survey Question 23. Survey Question 23 asked, “How long do you plan to remain in itinerant teaching?” More than a third of the respondents (37%) stated they would remain in itinerant teaching as long as they were able (see Table 23).

Table 23

Amount of Time an Itinerant Teacher will Remain Teaching

Response	<i>N</i>	%
As long as I am able	16	37.21
Until I am eligible for retirement benefits from this job	8	18.60
Until I am eligible for retirement benefits from a previous job	0	0
Until I am eligible for social security	3	6.98
Until a specific life event occurs (e.g., parenthood, marriage)	1	2.33
Until a more desirable job opportunity comes along	4	9.30
Definitely plan to leave as soon as I can	0	0
Undecided at this time	11	25.58

Survey Question 24. Survey Question 24 asked, “As a whole, are you satisfied as a teacher?” Remarkably, most respondents (90%) stated they were satisfied as a teacher (see Table 24).

Table 24

Teacher Satisfaction

Response	<i>N</i>	%
Yes	39	90.70
No	4	9.30

Survey Question 25. Survey *Question 25* asked, “Which factor would increase your current level of satisfaction the most?” Most respondents (80%) stated that a 10% increase in salary would increase their level of satisfaction (see Table 25).

Table 25

Factors that Would Increase Satisfaction as a Teacher

Response	<i>N</i>	%
Reduction of the number of students on your caseload	2	4.88
Supportive administration	2	4.88
A 10% salary increase	33	80.49
School conditions/resources	3	7.32
Higher quality of professional development	1	2.44

Note. (*n* = 41)

Qualitative Data from Responses to Teachers' Opinions of Their Work

Teachers were asked to respond to two open-ended questions. The purpose was to gain in-depth data to better understand teachers' decisions to become itinerant teachers of DHH students and to offer the opportunity to add any other information they wished for the researcher to better understand their jobs as itinerant teachers. These qualitative data were coded and the emergent themes are discussed here and examples from teachers' comments are included.

Survey Question 26. Survey Question 26 asked, “Why did you become an itinerant teacher?” There were five themes in response to this question: (a) diversity of work settings; (b) desire to serve the deaf, love for DHH students; (c) love working for the coop; (d) only job choice; and (e) to receive a second retirement.

Diversity of work settings. The most frequent response was having a diversity of working in different school districts versus working in one classroom or in one school as it provided flexibility and diversity.

I enjoy the diversity of students, schools, cities/towns, and administration within the different districts.

I enjoy working one-on-one with students. Like the opportunity to be in different schools and work with a range of ages.

I really enjoy the independence and flexibility of being a teacher and going to several different places to see different types of students. I like working with many different types of other professionals as well, besides just the different types of students.

Desire to serve the deaf; love for DHH students. Several participants stated they enjoy working with students who are deaf or hard of hearing. There were specific and unique teaching strategies used when working with DHH students.

I enjoy facilitating the learning of young children. I like working with deaf and hard of hearing kids.

Deaf education is challenging and interesting.

I enjoy teaching DHH students. There is a tremendous need for highly qualified DHH teachers in the rural areas of the state.

Enjoy the field of pedagogy specializing in deaf and hard of hearing students.

Love working for the Coop.

I love working with children in general, and when I had the opportunity to work at ASDB's SER-COOP I couldn't resist! I love working for the Coop; they are the reason I stay, even when stress is high.

Only job choice.

In rural town that's all you can be.

In the beginning this was all that was offered, available. Then, I enjoyed being in different schools and meeting staff at different locations.

To receive a second retirement. One person responded to the open-ended question as receiving a second retirement as a benefit.

Survey Question 27. Survey Question 27 asked, "Are there any other factors you think is important to my understanding of your job as an itinerant teacher?" There were four themes that emerged from the responses to this question: (a) travel and paperwork; (b) importance of having classroom experience; (c) collegiality, and (d) communication.

Travel and paperwork

The job of an itinerant has good and bad qualities. Yes, we move school to school and never really have a "typical" day. When a student is absent, we have that time to catch up on missed students and/or paperwork. We do, however, keep our classrooms in our cars and it's not always easy to get a room, a hallway, any available space to work with our kid-o's. With all that said, I personally wouldn't want it any other way! I love being a teacher of the deaf and I love being itinerant!

I like that an HI student can be in his/her home school even if it means my traveling to that location!

Paperwork is a major part of the job that they don't really teach you about in school. There are many days where I wish I could just work with my students but it seems half of my time is either on travel or on paperwork. There are times when it seems like the quantity of service is more important than the quality of service. If we want to give quality service, we need smaller case load and more plan time built into a schedule. (plan time, not in the car driving from one city to the next).

Importance of having classroom experience.

I believe that the most effective itinerant teachers are those with solid understanding of classroom teaching strategies and knowledge of the general education curriculum. Unfortunately, many itinerant teachers are not knowledgeable in these areas and this may cause them to become overwhelmed by the many roles that itinerant teachers take. Paperwork and consultation often take priority over actual teaching, and this leads to tremendous job dissatisfaction.

As for factors related to itinerant teaching, I think you should consider professional background. From my experience of 25+ years in the field of deaf education, the strongest itinerant teachers are those with classroom experience, and those who have great organizational skills and strong time management skills.

I spent 14 years as a classroom teacher for the deaf (in TUSD and at ASDB on campus) before transferring this year to the SER Cooperative. My classroom experiences certainly benefit me in my new position. I am very happy.

Collegiality

The emotional support offered by the other itinerant teachers is huge for me. Being alone most of the day, not part of a school can be very hard.

Being an itinerant teacher can be a lonely job. Having regular meetings and trainings is essential in having positive staff moral and enthusiasm about working with the students and the staff at schools.

Positive note: Flexibility with scheduling Negative note: Isolation and a lot of time driving.

Communication

Adequate support and communication is a must to keep the flow of information going back and forth. This flow is needed with ASDB and districts I serve. COMMUNICATION is essential!

Summary of Findings

Chapter 4 presents the results that were gathered using an online survey that reported the perceptions and attitudes of itinerant teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing (D/HH) and their effects on job satisfaction. In regard to professional development, those who participated in professional development activities relating to language strategies found them to be very useful, and content of subjects taught were found to be useful and the most attended (see Table 26). Remarkably, some of the concerns from teachers were their salary, the paperwork involved with itinerant teaching, and the limited amount of resources available to them. Overall, 91% of cooperative teachers seemed satisfied as a teacher. Based on results, the cooperative teachers felt support from administration, were satisfied with how the cooperatives were managed, and agreed that they were recognized for their efforts.

Table 26

Summary of Participation in Professional Development Activities

Participation in Professional Development Activity Related to:	Level of Usefulness					
	Yes	No	Not useful	Somewhat useful	useful	Very useful
Content of subjects taught	95.35	4.65	2.44	14.63	63.41	19.51
Language strategies	81.4	18.6	5.26	21.05	39.47	34.21
Communication skills	55.81	44.19	22.58	16.13	32.26	29.03
Students with multiple disabilities	37.21	62.79	22.73	27.27	22.73	22.27
Mentor programs	67.44	32.56	38.71	9.68	25.81	25.81

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The sections of this chapter present a summary of the study, findings, conclusions and recommendations for itinerant DHH programs with additional recommendations for practitioners and future research.

Summary of Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions and attitudes of itinerant teachers of the deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH) and their effects on job satisfaction. The purpose was accomplished by surveying itinerant teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing throughout the state of Arizona and their attitudes related to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction in their positions.

A review of literature found that the roles and responsibilities of DHH itinerant teachers are numerous and multi-faceted compared to classroom teachers. Itinerant teachers (a) work with students with a variety of hearing losses and educational needs; (b) work with regular classroom teachers and other school personnel; (c) plan, assess, and keep records; (d) coordinate and conduct consultation and IEP meetings; (e) work with parents; (f) provide technical support in regards to hearing assistive technology, (g) travel to different school to work with students, (h) provide accommodations and modifications to general education curriculum, (i) participate in professional development activities when offered; and (j) provide direct instruction to DHH students (Foster & Cue 2009). Due to the amount of responsibilities and logistics, some DHH teachers felt dissatisfied because of the amount of paperwork, state assessment tests, lack of family involvement, lack of time for nonteaching responsibilities and planning, lack of adult role models who

are deaf or hard of hearing, availability of appropriate tests, and the limited number of opportunities for professional development (Luckner & Hanks, 2003).

Studies indicated that teachers are experiencing stress and burnout along with the lack of job satisfaction, which leads to teacher attrition. Because of dissatisfaction, teachers are deciding to leave the profession while older teachers take early retirement. It is important that administrators adopt practices that will promote job satisfaction. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, the study examined responses of 43 itinerant DHH teachers to gain knowledge on job satisfaction of those teachers. The questionnaire contained 25 questions addressing different aspects of their job and their perceptions and attitudes of itinerant teaching. There were also two open-ended questions that allowed them to elaborate on their satisfaction or dissatisfaction of their position.

The results showed that in regards to professional development those who participated in professional development activities relating to Language Strategies and Content of Subjects Taught were found to be useful; Content of Subjects Taught was also found to be the most attended (see Table 26). Not surprisingly, some of the concerns from teachers were their salary, the paperwork involved with itinerant teaching, and the limited amount of resources available to them. Overall, 91% of cooperative teachers seemed satisfied as teachers. The cooperative teachers felt support from their administrators, were satisfied with how the cooperatives were managed, and agreed that they were recognized for their efforts.

Conclusions

There were a number of similarities from the literature. Similarities included the roles and responsibilities of itinerant teachers. Foster and Cue (2009) stated listed seven responsibilities of itinerant DHH teachers. Those same responsibilities were part of the job for ASDB cooperative teachers as well. Based on those characteristics, an itinerant DHH teacher is an instructor, mentor, advocate, colleague, and coordinator.

Another similarity was the amount of non-teaching responsibilities that are universal with all itinerant teachers: travel, consulting with general education staff, providing instructional accommodations and modifications, conducting in-services, setting up a work area and keeping updated on the latest teaching techniques and strategies for DHH children. Most of these responsibilities can take more time than actually working directly with a student. Some of the same barriers stated by Yarger and Luckner (1999) were similar to the experiences of ASDB itinerant teachers such as isolation and lack of support and collegiality.

Looking at the four research questions, the data from this study showed that itinerant DHH teachers have more complex roles and responsibilities as compared to a classroom teacher. The ASDB cooperative itinerant teachers participate in professional development as much as they can. The majority of itinerant DHH teachers in Arizona enjoy their work. They do have concerns with job security and salary, but the enjoyment they receive when working with their students appeared to outweigh their concerns.

Recommendations for Itinerant DHH programs

It is imperative that administrators of itinerant DHH programs provide ample support to its teachers. It is important that administrators be mindful of the amount of

travel by itinerant teachers and the amount of students in their caseload. It is also important for administrators to provide as much professional development opportunities as possible in order for teachers to keep informed of the latest trends and methodologies in the field of deaf education. Most importantly, full support from administration to deal with student issues, job crises, as well as moral support imperative to the retention of teachers.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study suggests several recommendations for future research:

1. This was a study of five regional cooperatives in one state. This study can be expanded to survey itinerant DHH teachers nationwide.
2. A study might focus on the understanding of itinerant teacher and administrator relationships in order to improve support of teachers.
3. As a practitioner solely working with DHH children without cochlear implants and now working with children with cochlear implants, a study could be focused on the differences of experiences, opinions, and professional development of those teachers. It is important to take a look at the amount and frequency of professional development provided within DHH programs. Professional development opportunities could focus on instructional strategies and auditory-verbal therapy that can be specifically used for children with cochlear implants.
4. A study could focus on a comparison of job satisfaction with DHH teachers who are itinerant and those who are non-itinerant.

5. Future studies using a mixed-method approach could be conducted to provide more information on job satisfaction of itinerant DHH teachers.

Lucker and Hanks (2003) suggested to reduce attrition; that attention needs to be paid to teacher preparation programs to prepare and inform future itinerant teachers the roles, responsibilities, and factors that affect both satisfaction and dissatisfaction in itinerant teachers.

School administration needs to do everything in their power to assist professionals in the field of deaf education to find ways of maximizing their achievements, to feel pride in past successes, and to know that other colleagues share their feelings of frustration and discouragement. In addition, deaf education professionals need to find positive ways of dealing effectively with the changing demands of the job, as well as to identify ways to protect and take of themselves so that they can meet future challenges effectively and productively. (p. 15).

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